

## ***FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

**Meeting Date:** March 14, 2013

**Agenda Item:** Canyon Ferry Reservoir and Lake Helena Commercial Fishing Regulations

**Division:** Fisheries    **Action Needed:** Approval of Final Rule/Regulations

**Time Needed for this Presentation:** 15 minutes

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### **Background**

FWP received an application for a 2013 commercial fishing permit to harvest carp via active seining from Canyon Ferry Reservoir and Lake Helena. By statute, the FWP Commission is authorized to approve one commercial fishing operation for each body of water and to establish specific regulations (permit stipulations) regarding gear, limits, seasons, closures and any other limitations deemed necessary. This application is for a Class B Permit that requires a fee of \$200 plus a \$1,000 Surety Bond. At its January meeting, the commission proposed regulations that would govern this permit and instructed FWP to solicit public comment and submit a recommendation at the March 14 commission meeting. FWP's recommendations for final regulations are included in the information package.

### **Public Involvement Process & Results**

Commercial fishing regulations for Canyon Ferry Reservoir and Lake Helena were originally approved by the FWP Commission in 2005 after public input and an environmental assessment. In subsequent years, FWP has provided opportunities for the public to comment on permit requests. FWP received one comment on the permit request for 2013. The comment expressed support and stated that too many carp hurt the walleye population.

### **Alternatives and Analysis**

The FWP Commission can approve or deny the proposed regulations as written, or revise the regulations and solicit public comment again. In response to the comment received, FWP does not have a sufficient understanding of food web dynamics in these waters to make a reliable prediction of whether or not this commercial seining operation would benefit walleye by reducing carp numbers. Available data suggests there is little interaction between the two species in terms of predation or competition. Walleye have been found to utilize carp as a food source but they are not a preferred food item. Carp may prey on walleye eggs during the spawn, but there is no evidence of this or that it impacts walleye year-class strength. Studies have evaluated the issue of competition for food and have found that there is not much of a diet overlap between the two species on these waters. FWP anticipates that even if changes do occur to the walleye population, they would likely be minor and probably not measurable through the normal monitoring practices.

### **Agency Recommendation & Rationale**

FWP recommends that the commission approve the permit and associated regulations as proposed at the Jan. 10 commission meeting. The permit regulations ensure that bycatch of other fish species would not be excessive, and conflicts with recreationists and waterfowl would be minimized. Additionally, the public comment was supportive.

### **Proposed Motion**

"I move the FWP Commission approve the permit and regulations for a commercial fishing operation on Canyon Ferry Reservoir and Lake Helena for 2013."